

PSYC 566: ATTITUDE CHANGE

Text:

- Persuasion, Social Influence, & Compliance (5th Ed.) ISBN: 978-0205912964
- Influence: Science & Practice (5th Ed.) ISBN: 978-0205609994

Course Description:

In a 15-year career as a car salesman, Joe Girard sold over 13,000 vehicles. That is an average of over 5 cars or trucks *per day*, and enough evidence for the Guinness Book of World Records to name him the world's greatest salesman. How did Girard accomplish such a feat? Does Girard just have "it;" are his abilities so special that nobody can ever again match his numbers? Was Joe Girard's service that much better? Were his prices that much cheaper? Maybe not... When Robert Cialdini interviewed the salesman he found that Girard was unwittingly using many of the basic psychological principles of attitude change in order to hit such remarkable sales numbers. Put simply, Joe Girard is an excellent persuader. And he is not alone.

Every single day *you* are the target of both sophisticated and basic attitude change attempts. These attempts target your needs, motivations, and desires in order to change your attitude. Sometimes attitude change attempts are obvious, other times they are subtle, and some are even unrecognizable. Some persuasive communications are put forward for noble causes (e.g., charity drives, environmental causes), some are for less noble causes (e.g., trying to dupe you out of your money), but all attempts have one goal: to get you to do something that you might not have done otherwise. So, why become an expert in attitude change and persuasion? First, because once you understand the **theory** and **practice** of attitude change, you will be more equipped to deal with the many persuasive attempts that target you each day. Second, because this same knowledge can make you more successful in your personal and professional life.

Course Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to answer the following questions:

- What is attitude change, and what makes someone persuasive?
- How are innate motivations targets for attitude change attempts?
- What are the psychological aspects of compliance & conformity?
- What is automatic vs. controlled processing, and how does this relate to persuasion?
- How do persuaders utilize your behavior to influence your attitudes?
- How can we resist manipulation by others trying to change our attitudes?
- How can we prevent others from turning attitudes against our position?
- How can we interpret and apply scientific research and methodology on attitude change?
- How does the concept of attitude change directly relate to your life, goals, and interests?
- How does attitude change and persuasion research inform the process of interrogating suspected terrorists/criminals?

This course is built upon a foundation of broader learning objectives, which informed the questions above:

- Research Methods – Everything that we learn about attitude change will be rooted in decades of empirical research. Your textbooks, and any assigned readings, are compilations of the work of social psychological researchers. This work is based in theory and tested with rigorous scientific methodologies.
- Critical Thinking – I am not interested in testing your rote memorization abilities. This course will demand that you master and then integrate the knowledge presented. Assignments, exams, and the project will provide conduits through which you can demonstrate your knowledge by applying sound attitude change theory and research to practical and personal examples.
- Communication – You will be asked to demonstrate your acquired knowledge through regular assignments, in-class discussions, and a professional presentation.
- Content – We will cover basic social cognitive principles, general psychological perspectives, and the history and theories that underlie the field of attitude change

Course Format:

Most importantly, this is not a lecture course: you will not be subjected to hours of being talked at...I do not enjoy putting people to sleep, and I am sure that you do not enjoy trying to fight to keep your eyes open during class. Class time will be split amongst *group discussions* guided by students, in-class group activities, games, and demonstrations that highlight course material.

This course is designed to be a highly advanced, seminar-style experience with equal attention paid to empiricism and theory. You will be responsible for regular assignments that serve to enhance the encoding, integration, retention, and application of important content areas & research. These assignments will prepare you for in-class discussions as well as for your exams and project. This class is indeed *more work* than many typical college courses, but given your hard work I promise that you will get a lot more out of it in return.

Worksheets:

- Every day (except where noted) you will be expected to complete an online worksheet designed to facilitate your understanding and integration of the important material in that day's reading. Worksheets will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions. To answer a fill-in-the-blank question that has two or more blanks in the same sentence, you must put a semi-colon (;) between each answer.
- You should budget your time wisely (*approximately 3-4 hours*) to complete these assignments. Worksheets are accessible via Sakai and must be submitted before the start of that day's class. A PDF of each worksheet is available in the "Resources" link on Sakai. Once you have answered all worksheet questions, you will submit your answers in the "Tests and Quizzes" link.
- It is highly recommended that you complete the worksheet in a Microsoft Word document first and then copy & paste your answers into Sakai. This will prevent you from losing data should any errors or internet interruptions occur.

**Note – worksheets must be your own work and writing! The same rules of plagiarism and intellectual honesty apply to your Worksheets that apply to any course essay or exam that you have ever taken.

Mastery Checks:

- To begin each class (except where noted), you will demonstrate your mastery of a specific theory or concept from that day's reading. I will inform you of the specific concept or theory to be demonstrated prior to class. (You can find this information at the bottom of each worksheet.) Mastery Checks will begin at **exactly 9:30am**. Any person that arrives after the start of a mastery check will not be allowed to take one.
- At the end of the semester, students' 2 lowest mastery check grades will be automatically dropped, essentially allowing two "free passes" for unforeseeable events or purposive rest.

Exams

There will be 3 exams designed to assess your understanding and application of the essential concepts and theories in attitude change. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions. Anything covered in class or in the assigned work is fair game, though the worksheet questions, mastery checks, and in-class assignments will highlight the most important concepts for you to focus on. You can expect exams to be cumulative with regards to the application of early theoretical perspectives to newer material. There will be no "make up" exams without a valid medical excuse or other *documented* emergency.

Team Project

****Note** – in this research exposure course, you will be working with a Graduate Research Consultant, Jenna Clark, who will assist you in the research project. The GRC Program is sponsored by the Office for Undergraduate Research (www.unc.edu/depts/our), and you may be able to use this research exposure course to meet a requirement of the Carolina Research Scholars Program (http://www.unc.edu/depts/our/students/students_crsp.html). I encourage you to visit the OUR website to learn about how you might engage in research, scholarship and creative performance while you are at Carolina.

An overarching goal of this class is to apply the theoretical principles of attitude change to benefit the UNC community. You will do this by creating, developing, and presenting a theoretically-grounded public service campaign with the intention of changing some maladaptive attitude or behavior. The public service campaign will include the construction of a public service announcement (PSA) poster designed to change attitudes/behaviors, a persuasive marketing campaign to draw attention to your poster, and a professional presentation of the entire campaign to a board of experts in the field. This will be an opportunity to creatively demonstrate what you've learned from the course and apply it to create a positive change within your campus, state, and national community.

Further details on the team project will be distributed in a separate project handout but you can expect it to be a major focus of your work in this course, as well as a very demanding but ultimately rewarding assignment.

Phase Papers

The project will consist of 5 phases: 1) Issue Establishment: Proving the problem exists with empirical research support, 2) Intervention: Changing attitudes via an originally constructed PSA, 3) Evaluation: Empirically checking the impact of your PSA on your target audience's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors, 4) Market Penetration: Designing a compliance campaign that will cause as many people to view your PSA as possible, and 5) Presentation: Defending your entire project to a board of social psychologists.

Each student will assume the responsibility of leading his/her team through one of the first four phases (excluding phase 5 – presentation). See the project guidebook for more information on “leadership teams” & “support teams” for each project phase. As a result, the leadership team (consisting of 1-2 students) for each phase will turn in a **3-page** summary report of a) a 2-page summary of the conceptual research supporting the work done in that phase & b) a 1-page summary of the contributions to that phase made by all team members (i.e., what everybody did to help develop & execute that phase of the project).

These 3-page phase papers should conclude with an APA style reference page (does not count toward the 3-page limit). Additionally, all phase papers should be combined to form one large “Project Report” to be handed in on the day of your project presentation. The Project Report will contain the phase papers for phases 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the project.

Student Responsibilities

There is a growing yet troubling belief amongst college students that academe is not the “real world.” That the professionalism, etiquette, timeliness, and tone attributed to a professional work environment need not be present in a college classroom.

While this may have been your experience before, it will not be so now. A major component of my philosophy is that college must serve as a training ground for the rest of your life, and we have a duty to afford you the socialization not only to theoretical concepts and material but also to the skills and expectations needed to properly conduct yourself in any future career.

I expect that students will take *personal responsibility* for their learning in this course.

- **Budget your time:** You must plan your time efficiently. According to the University of North Carolina student guidelines, you should plan for 2 hours of out-of-class work per week for every 1-hour spent in class.
- **Be on time (and prepared):** If you would not walk into a board meeting ten minutes late, then do not walk into a class meeting casually late or unprepared.
- **Seek assistance:** If you need a concept clarified, help with effective study habits, or anything else relevant to the course, it is your responsibility to a) attempt to resolve the issue via effort and research, b) contact your teammates for help, and c) contact me for resolution.
- **Get the info:** You are responsible for all information presented in class, even if you have an excused absence for a particular day. If you are going to miss a class meeting, plan to get the information needed.
- **NO LAPTOPS:** I have considered all of the evidence for and against the inclusion of laptop computers in class. At this point there is a preponderance of evidence that laptop computers do more harm than good. They inhibit memory at all stages of cognition. They lower motivation to process. They distract peers. If necessary for medical purposes students may take notes on a laptop (medical excuse required), but are asked to open only Microsoft Word or a note-taking application.

I expect students to maintain proper *classroom etiquette* in order to ensure an environment that fosters learning and development.

- Treat the views, opinions, experiences, and abilities of your fellow classmates and instructor with the same respect that you would expect to be treated with.
- Engaging in social conversation with a classmate while the instructor or fellow students are talking is not only exceptionally disrespectful and rude; it is completely unacceptable.

- Asking questions of a classmate while others are talking is along the same lines. Please allow a speaker to finish their thought and ask any questions you might have of the entire class. We cannot engage in a great discussion if questions are not bounced off the entire group.
- Save newspapers, word & math puzzles, and electronic communications (e.g., texting, email, facebook, twitter) for outside of class.
- Sleep at home, under a tree, or with a friend, I don't care, just don't sleep during class. If you are too sick or too tired to stay awake, please just stay home, recuperate, and come to the next class ready to contribute.

I expect that all students will maintain *professional communication* standards.

- All email communication should have a title line that begins with the course number (PSYC 566.001) and then what the email pertains (e.g., PSYC 566 project question)
- All emails should contain a separate salutation (Dr. Buzinski,), body (Your question or comment), and signature (Sincerely, your name).

I expect that all students will *contribute equally* to their team project.

- Social loafing was described by Latane, Williams, & Harkins (1979) as a social disease and it will not be tolerated in this class.
- Part of your project grade will be determined by intra-team evaluations, given at random points throughout the semester
- If you do not contribute equally and consistently, *do not expect to receive the same grade* on your project. Additionally, please note that *if students fail to meet a project deadline* they will lose 5 points from their final project grade (per deadline).

Evaluation

Your grades are not given to you and you do not deserve an A for simply being in class or trying hard. Grades are operationalizations of course mastery, retention, & achievement and are earned through your diligence and hard work. Grades should not be viewed as a goal or end-state, but rather an indication of your progress as an effective social psychologist/attitude change researcher. My focus is on creating learning and providing each of you with real-world skills to take out of this course – if you adopt that focus your grades will take care of themselves. Your grades will be determined by the following factors...

Assignment	Possible Points	Grade	Points
Worksheets	17 each = 170 total	A	940-1000
Mastery Checks	2 each = 30 total	A-	900-939
Exam 1	200	B+	866-899
Exam 2	200	B	833-865
Exam 3	200	B-	800-832
Project	150	C+	766-799
Phase Papers	50	C	733-765
Total	1000	C-	700-732
		D+	666-699
		D	600-665
		F	<600

Grade Questions:

I will be happy to discuss any questions that you may have with particular grades. However, grade questions must be submitted *in writing within two weeks* of receiving the grade. This includes final course grades. After two weeks students may still meet to discuss graded assignments but no formal re-grading will be conducted and grades will be final.

- **Make-ups:** If you have an excused absence and miss an assignment, then you have exactly *two weeks* to make up the missed assignment. After two weeks, your grade will automatically revert to a zero. The only caveat to this policy is if your excused absence forces you to miss an extended period of time and you cannot realistically complete the missed assignment within the two week period. Documentation will be required for this type of absence.
- **Extra Credit:** You will have several opportunities throughout the semester to earn extra credit points via participation in activities done in class. If you are absent during a day in which an extra credit activity is done, you forfeit the opportunity to obtain these points.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Policies: All students are expected to be familiar with the University Honor code and it's policies regarding academic dishonesty, found in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. Any instance of academic dishonesty will result in zero points for that assignment, and may result in failing the course.

The following is from the ISJG...

“II. Offenses Under the Honor Code

- General Responsibilities. It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to:
 - Obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code;
 - Refrain from lying, cheating, or stealing;
 - Conduct themselves so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community; and
 - Refrain from conduct that impairs or may impair the capacity of University and associated personnel to perform their duties, manage resources, protect the safety and welfare of members of the University community, and maintain the integrity of the University.Offenses proscribed by this section include, but shall not be limited to, those set out in Sections II.B. and II.C. Additional guidance concerning the interpretation of Section II of this Instrument may from time to time be issued by the Committee on Student Conduct as provided in Section V.E.
- Academic Dishonesty. It shall be the responsibility of every student enrolled at the University of North Carolina to support the principles of academic integrity and to refrain from all forms of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Plagiarism in the form of deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.
 - Falsification, fabrication, or mis-representation of data, other information, or citations in connection with an academic assignment, whether graded or otherwise.
 - Unauthorized assistance or unauthorized collaboration in connection with academic work, whether graded or otherwise.
 - Cheating on examinations or other academic assignments, whether graded or otherwise, including but not limited to the following:

- Using unauthorized materials and methods (notes, books, electronic information, telephonic or other forms of electronic communication, or other sources or methods), or
 - Representing another's work as one's own.
- Violating procedures pertaining to the academic process, including but not limited to the following:
 - Violating or subverting requirements governing administration of examinations or other academic assignments;
 - Compromising the security of examinations or academic assignments; or
 - Engaging in other actions that compromise the integrity of the grading or evaluation process.
- Deliberately furnishing false information to members of the University community in connection with their efforts to prevent, investigate, or enforce University requirements regarding academic dishonesty.
- Forging, falsifying, or misusing University documents, records, identification cards, computers, or other resources so as to violate requirements regarding academic dishonesty.
- Violating other University policies that are designed to assure that academic work conforms to requirements relating to academic integrity.
- Assisting or aiding another to engage in acts of academic dishonesty prohibited by Section II.B.

Disabilities Services: If you have a physical, medical, psychological, or learning disability that is going to impact your attendance or require accommodation, please let me know. In order to ensure that your learning needs are appropriately met, you will need to provide documentation of your disability or medical condition to the Department of Disability Services. The Department of Disability Services will then provide verification of disability that describes the accommodations needed for this class, which you should provide to me.

Course Schedule:

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1	1/12 – Introduction to PSYC 566	1/14 – Social Cognition Structure MC1
2	1/19 – Social Cognition Function, MC2; Project Teams Formed	1/21 – Persuasion and Attitude Structure, MC3; PA: Leadership Teams & Social Cause Applications Due
3	1/26 – Attitude Function & Measurement, MC4	1/28 – PA: Phase 1 Worksheet due (bring laptops to class)
4	2/2 – Motivated Social Cognition, MC5	2/4 – Motivated Social Cognition, MC6
5	2/9 – PA: Phase 2 Worksheet due; PA: Intervention Poster Draft due on 2/13	2/11 – Models of Attitude Change, MC7
6	Exam 1	2/18 – Structuring & Countering Persuasive Messages; MC8
7	2/23 - PA: Phase 3 Worksheet due; PA: Meet with GRC by 2/26 to finalize data collection procedure & receive approval	2/25 – Credibility/Source Characteristics; MC9
8	3/1 – Source Character/Audience Persuadability; MC10	3/3 – Conformity and Obedience; MC11
9	3/8 – Reciprocity; MC12	3/10 – PA: Midterm Presentations & Recommendations (15 minutes per team)
10	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
11	3/22 – Commitment, Scarcity, & Compliance; MC13	EXAM 2
12	3/29 – PA: Phase 4 Worksheet due	3/31 – Language in Persuasion; MC14
13	4/5 – Non-Verbal Persuasion; MC15	4/7 – Esoteric Persuasion; MC16
14	4/12 – Practice Presentations (15mins) – As polished as possible	4/14 – Interrogation; MC17
15	4/19 – PRESENTATIONS	4/21 – PRESENTATIONS
16	4/26 – Wrap Up	FINAL EXAM on 4/28 at 8:00am